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Message Text

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42
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 L-03 OMB-01 FRB-02

SS-15 NSC-10 PRS-01 DODE-00 PM-07 RSR-01 /099 W
---------- 054436
P 101141Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2529

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8309

FOR STATE/AID

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: EFIN, ECON
SUBJ: ELECTRICITY AND WATER PRICES

REF: PHNOM PENH 8294

1. SUBSEQUENT TO DRAFTING REFTEL THERE WERE NEW DEVELOPMENTS TODAY REGARDING THE INCREASE OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER PRICES. DURING A MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER IN TAM AND THE AMBASSADOR, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS HAVING A PROBLEM SUPPORTING ELECTRICITY AND WATER PRICE INCREASES AT THIS TIME. AS REPORTED EARLIER HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO INCREASE PRICES WHEN THE ELECTRICTY SUPPLY IS PRESENTLY INADEQUATE. WITH THE CONSTANT THREAT OF IN TAM'S RESIGNATION FACING US WE ARE SEEKING AN ACCOMMODATION THAT HE WILL FIND ACCEPTABLE AND THAT STILL MEETS OUR OBJECTIONS.

2. ACCORDINGLY, THE ACTING ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DISCUSSED WITH THE BNC GOVERNOR SOK CHHONG THIS MORNING A PLAN THAT MAY BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRIME MINSITER. WE HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ANNOUNCE AFTER ITS MEETING ON MONDAY, AUGUST 13, THE PRECISE INCREASE IN PRICES TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ON OCTOBER 1. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE GENERATORS FROM SAIGON WOULD BE PLACED INTO OPERATION BY APPROXIMATELY OCTOBER 1 AND
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THEREFORE IN TAM'S MAIN OBJECTION TO PRICE INCREASES WOULD BE

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OVERCOME. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE BY PRAKAS OR OTHER LEGALLY BEINGING DECREE AS MAY BE APPROPRIATE. WITH THE ISSUANCE OF A DECREE WE WOULD AGREE TO COUNTERPART RELEASES.

3. SOK CHHONG CONSIDERED THE SUGGESTION AS REASONABLE. HE WILL SEE BOTH SIRIK MATAK AND CHENG HING THIS AFTERNOON. TOGETHER THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE IN TAM THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD APPROVE SUCH A DECREE AT MONDAY'S MEETING. WE WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE SIK CHHONG OVER THE WEEKEND AND WILL ADVICE AS NECESSARY.
SWANK

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